

MAGNIFICENT Wycombe Wanderers enhanced their title chances with a devastating performance that destroyed fellow contenders Bromley in a Berger Isthmian League match at Loakes Park on Saturday.

On a bitterly cold day the Wanderers played some heartwarming football and so moved to the brink of the title race with their fourth league win in succession.

They now stand third — their highest position for more than two years — and now for the first time can talk about a realistic challenge for the league title they last won six years ago. There's a long way to go, but at least they are in the thick of things near the top of the table.

Yet a match which ended in scenes of jubilation for the faithful few supporters, started most unpromisingly. For the opening quarter Wycombe could not get their game together against a team one place above them in the table.

Gift

All that changed when the visitors presented Wycombe with an early Christmas present in the form of a gift own goal.

The Blues had just begun to click into top gear when, following a four man move, winger Tony Price crossed from the left to the near post. Wycombe forwards were beaten to the ball by Bromley left back Eddie Read, who played a back pass to his goalkeeper from point blank range.

'Keeper Malcolm Broadway, reputedly one of the best in the league, was caught off balance by this pass, and could only fumble at it, as the ball crossed the line.

This was just the boost Wycombe needed and for the rest of the first half produced wave upon wave of attacks on the Bromley goal. Steve Long saw a header cleared off the line from Price's cross, and then Terry Glynn went inches wide from Mick Holifield's free-kick.

Then right on half-time Wycombe got a vital second that their efforts deserved. Price's long ball through the

by MICHAEL KNOX Wycombe 5, Bromley 0

middle found Glynn in space and the talented striker placed his shot wide of the advancing Broadway.

Wycombe started the second half in the same vein. Price saw a shot fumbled, Glynn fired just wide and Long appeared to have been brought down inside the area by most people except the officials.

Blast

All that action occurred in the first six minutes of the new half, but it was not long

before Wycombe increased the lead.

Price, who contributed largely to the first two goals, this time scored one of his own. After robbing the unfortunate Read on the right, Price cut inside apparently looking to pass to a colleague. But suddenly a gap opened up in front of him and he blasted the ball inside Broadway's near post.

Bromley's manager had clearly seen enough of Read for one day and replaced him with coloured substitute

Carlton Fairweather. But before this new formation settled in, Wycombe had scored a fourth.

Long exposed Bromley's severe shortage of space at the heart of their defence to run on to Paul Birdey's lobbed through pass, and kept his cool before slotting past Broadway.

Stirred by the thought of a humiliating defeat, Bromley bucked up their ideas and both leading scorer Butch Dunn and Dave Lucas went close to pulling back a goal.

Brilliant

But the highlight of the second half was a brilliant run down the left by Blues full-back George Borg, who beat man after man. After reaching the bye-line he placed the ball into the path of Glynn who ruined a great move by rifling a gilt-edged chance against the crossbar, Borg deserved better than that!

Nine minutes from end Wycombe made it 5-0 thanks to a brilliant goal by Mick Holifield, who must have run fully 40 yards following an interception, before beating Broadway with a pin-point shot. It was the perfect end to a perfect day for Wycombe.

It was not, however, the end of Bromley's day. They were kept in their dressing room, for more than an hour following their heaviest defeat of the season. One senses that their title challenge may well have evaporated.

WYCOMBE: G. Lester; P. Birdseye (sub: K. Wilson 81 mins); G. Borg, R. Davies, S. Hardwick, R. Dell, S. Long, J. Jacobs, T. Glynn, A. Price, M. Holifield.

BROMLEY: M. Broadway; C. Mace, E. Read (sub: C. Fairweather 57 minutes); T. Collins, D. Lucas, R. Clarke, A. White, B. Dunn, D. Wright, S. Tomlin, D. Brown.

Referee: A. Bowers (Oxford).

Half-time 2-0. Scorers: Wycombe — Read o.g. (25 mins), Glynn (45), Price (55), Long (58), Holifield (81).

Attendance: 737.

BERGER ISTHMIAN LEAGUE PREMIER DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Enfield	24	12	8	4	51	29	44
Dagenham	26	11	9	6	51	36	42
Wycombe	23	11	6	6	41	27	39
Sutton	21	10	7	4	39	29	37
Bromley	22	10	6	6	39	33	36
Harrow	23	10	5	8	42	28	35
Slough	18	9	7	2	25	15	34
Dulwich	23	8	9	6	37	33	33
*Barking	26	9	6	11	36	46	31
Woking	24	9	3	12	30	38	30
Leytonstone	19	8	4	7	36	31	28
Hayes	20	8	4	8	19	24	28
Hitchin	19	7	5	7	28	21	26
Tooting	23	7	5	11	24	32	26
Boreham Wd	20	6	7	7	29	36	25
Walthamstow	21	7	3	11	19	33	24
Staines	22	6	5	11	23	32	23
Croydon	20	4	10	6	19	19	22
Harlow	20	5	7	8	25	31	22
Carshalton	19	7	1	11	26	39	22
Leatherh'd	25	4	10	11	17	30	22
Rendon	20	5	5	10	24	31	20

*2pts deducted.

Manager happy

Amersham 1, Waltham Abbey 1

AMERSHAM manager Dennis Smith was content with his side's London Spartan League Premier Division draw with Waltham Abbey who extended their unbeaten run to eight matches on Saturday.

Ian Barr was out of the Magpies side due to suspension for a sending off earlier in the season and

Stuart Brandon was also out with a leg injury.

Waltham went into the lead in the 25th minute when a forward moved into the area, and unmarked put a corner past Gus Leitrim in goal.

Early in the second half Terry Leigh joined the attack from the substitute's bench and soon afterwards Bobby Hazell lobbed the goalkeeper from the edge of the area after a fine run by Andrew Polowie had been parried by the keeper.

AMERSHAM: G. Leitrim, G. Stevenson, A. Polowie, C. Mulkern, P. Renshaw, M. Tanski, K. Leigh, C. Smith, G. Biggins (sub: T. Leigh 60 mins), D. Dumbarton, B. Hazell.

Kennedy in action

Southall Reserves 0, Wycombe Reserves 4

HOWARD Kennedy played his first full game since his leg operation as Wycombe Reserves put four goals past their Suburban League North Division opponents for the second successive match on Wednesday night.

Playing at Southall Reserves, Wycombe led by a Jimmy Richardson goal at the interval.

The game had barely restarted after the break when Ken Wilson, who had supplied the cross for Richardson to score the first, got his own name on the scoresheet.

The partnership combined well in the 72nd minute when Richardson headed in Wilson's corner. Phil Bycroft, playing his second

match for the club scored Wycombe's fourth goal to round off a fine team performance.

Afterwards, the referee congratulated the teams on a free flowing and clean match, and commented it had been a pleasure to control.

Wycombe: C. Way, S. Dexter, T. Lee, P. Bycroft, K. Mead, M. Richardson, N. Shrimpton (sub P. Miles 63 mins), H. Kennedy, A. Hunt, J. Richardson (sub Clarke 85 mins), K. Wilson.

Sorry!

IN last week's Midweek it was reported that following the FA Cup with Bournemouth, several Wycombe players were upset that no committee member visited them in the dressing room. This was incorrect, as a number of the committee did visit the players. We apologise for the error and any embarrassment it may have caused.